

are making great sacrifices, are left alone to fend for themselves, as they suffer the pain and anguish of post-traumatic stress disorder, the despair of losing friends to roadside bombs, or the depression and helplessness felt after multiple deployments that are stressing their families to the breaking point. This is not just about the armed servicemembers who commit suicide; it is about the deep and painful despair that drives them to do it. I know the Army says they have effective programs in place. But if that is true, where are the outcomes? Why do we have an ever-increasing suicide rate in the military?

The GAO just reported last week that the DOD—Department of Defense—does not even know if the post-deployment health reassessment surveys are being completed. Now, for those who may not have heard about this tool, the PDHRA, as it is called, surveys health and mental health concerns within 90 and 120 days of deployment. Well, how can DOD say they are good stewards of mental health when they cannot show us they are even doing these screenings?

The DOD's position on this amendment I am offering is that it "would establish a legislative mandate for programs already ongoing or within the Secretary's authority to establish. However, the administration supports the goals of this legislation and we look forward to working with Congress to address these concerns."

Well, they may have the current authority, but the numbers do not bear out they are actually doing it. Frankly, my staff has met—and I have also—with veterans in Iowa who say that while programs like this are in place and working well in some units, it is not a universal experience for Armed Services members. Too many brave young men and women are falling through the cracks, and the DOD is simply not doing a thorough job here. One ignored soldier who has had mental health problems—who is stressed out, who has seen his buddies' arms and legs disappear from bombings or had their lives taken away, who is on multiple deployments, and he has kids back home—one soldier with those kinds of stresses who is ignored is one soldier too many.

That is why Congress has to act to make this a priority. Yes, this is going to be a legislative mandate, and I intend it to be that. When GAO tells us that DOD cannot even tell us what they are doing, then I think it is time for a legislative mandate.

The military does an extraordinarily good job of treating our warriors' physical wounds and preventing death and disability. It is time to place an equal priority to treating their psychological wounds, their emotional wounds, and preventing suicides. That is exactly what this amendment will accomplish.

As I have said, there is already excellent language in the underlying Defense authorization bill to expand men-

tal health services for Active-Duty servicemembers. This amendment would add suicide prevention training for armed servicemembers and their families. It would add additional postdeployment assistance and a stigma reduction outreach campaign to aid in those efforts—a campaign to reduce the stigma of a soldier who is having mental health problems from seeking help.

We all know—those of us who have been in the military—what it is like. You do not want to admit you are having psychological problems, that this, somehow, is something you are not supposed to have happen to you. So you have to reduce the stigma of this so these young men and women who are having these problems will seek help and by getting that help will heal their psychological wounds.

It is a simple, commonsense approach to a pervasive, disturbing trend, as I said, a very growing problem in the military. So I hope all my colleagues can join with us to support the dedicated men and women serving our country and support this needed amendment.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I see the chairman of the committee. I think the work on the bill tonight is concluded, and I recommend we go off the bill and open the floor to morning business, if that is agreeable.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, would Senator SANDERS be willing, as a number of other colleagues are, that his remarks, although they relate to the bill, be in morning business?

Mr. SANDERS. Absolutely.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. In that case, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now move off the bill, move to morning business, and that Senators GRAHAM and LIEBERMAN be recognized and then Senator SANDERS be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, if I might say to my colleague, Senator GRAHAM has an airplane he is trying to catch.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I wonder if Senator GRAHAM could speak for just a few minutes, and then we could turn to Senator SANDERS and then to Senator LIEBERMAN.

Mr. President, I ask Senator GRAHAM, how many minutes does he wish?

Mr. GRAHAM. Three minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now move off the bill and go to morning business and that Senator GRAHAM be recognized for 3 minutes and then Senator SANDERS be recognized for up to 20 minutes. I want Senator LIEBERMAN to hear that request.

Mr. SANDERS. I say to the Senator, I listened to your speech.

Mr. LEVIN. That Senator SANDERS be recognized for up to 20 minutes and Senator LIEBERMAN be recognized for up to 20 minutes. That is my unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WARNER. No objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Chair.

IRAQ

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I just want to let my colleagues know where I am coming from, along with Senator LIEBERMAN, that amendment No. 5368, I believe it is, is an amendment offered by Senator LIEBERMAN and myself that speaks of the surge, the success of the surge, how vital it was that we turn Iraq around, and the fact that the surge has worked.

General Petraeus said today in the Washington Post, I believe, that Iraq is still the central battlefield in the war on terror. Senator OBAMA has disagreed with that on numerous occasions, saying it is Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The truth is, the battle regarding the war on terror is an idea, not a place, and the fight now is in Iraq. Bin Laden said: Go to the land of the two rivers. Make sure we win that battle. Bin Laden has always seen Iraq as an outcome-determinative event. So does General Petraeus. So does Senator MCCAIN, Senator GRAHAM, and Senator LIEBERMAN.

So the good news is that battle has taken place in Iraq between al-Qaida, the Iraqi people, and the coalition forces, and we have greatly diminished al-Qaida. They suffered a mighty blow at the hands of fellow Muslims who turned on al-Qaida after tasting their agenda. I cannot think of a more appropriate topic for the Senate to take up than to comment on what I think is the most historic, successful counterinsurgency operation in military history, to memorialize that it has worked, to acknowledge those who sacrificed to make it work, those who led our men and women in battle. This, to me, is very appropriate and important. It was a year ago today that General Petraeus testified about his plan in Iraq, and a year later we see stunning success militarily, economically, and politically. So I believe with all the passion I can muster about this topic that the Senate needs to take this up, discuss it, debate it, and vote on it.

I thank Senator LIEBERMAN for his steadfast leadership over the last year. I say to the Senator, you, my friend, will go down in history as being one of the Senators who stood up at a time when the country needed people to speak out. We turned this war around because of people like yourself and Senator MCCAIN but mainly because of

the leadership of General Petraeus and the men and women in uniform, Ambassador Crocker and his team, and the Iraqi people themselves.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 20 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the legislation we are dealing with today authorizes more than \$500 billion, and even in Washington that is a heck of a lot of money. That expenditure comes at a time when we have massive amounts of unmet needs in our country, when there is a crumbling infrastructure, a need to invest in sustainable energy, a need to address education, and many other needs. On top of all of that, we are looking at a \$9.5 trillion national debt and a record-breaking deficit.

I hear many of my colleagues come to the floor and speak about waste and fraud in all kinds of agencies and, frankly, that is appropriate. Our job as Members of Congress is to make sure we do our best to see that not one nickel—not one nickel—is spent in waste or in fraud or unwisely. But just as we should do that with the Department of Agriculture or with Human Services, we should also do it with the Defense Department; in fact, even more so with the Defense Department, because their budget is so huge—\$500 billion at a time of massive amounts of unmet needs in this country. It appears that not a week goes by when one doesn't open a newspaper or see a television program which deals with another example of horrendous waste, fraud, or abuse which takes place within the Department of Defense.

I know my colleagues on the Defense Committee, Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER, are aware of these things and they are trying, but this is tough stuff. I think we have to raise our profile in addressing this waste, fraud, and abuse.

Just some examples: In March of this year, we learned that a 22-year-old Defense contractor peddled as much as \$300 million in old ammunition, much of it defective, to the Afghan Army and to their police forces. That is right. AEY, a fly-by-night company, landed the huge contract, despite its record of botched dealings with the State Department and Defense Department. In fact, the State Department had placed this company on a watch list of companies suspected of illegal arms transactions.

Further, the Pentagon inspector general revealed that \$321 million was paid out to cover salaries of 1,000 anonymous employees in the Iraqi Ministry of Finance. That amounts to \$320,000 per employee—not bad in Iraq where

people do very well if they make \$50 or \$60 a week, but we are not even sure that the employees saw any of this money.

We also learned not terribly long ago that the Army ousted the contracting officer overseeing Kellogg, Brown & Root's huge Iraq support contract when this distinguished public servant refused to approve paying the company more than \$1 billion in questionable charges. In other words, he did his job. He took a hard look at where this money was going. There were red flags popping up all over the place. He said: Wait a minute. We are not going to pay this money. His reward was not a commendation but his firing.

And on and on it goes. The Air Force paid a private U.S. contractor \$32 million to construct a Ramadi, Iraq airbase. That is OK, except the only problem is the contractor cashed a check and the facility was never built—\$32 million for a project never undertaken.

Another contractor was paid \$142 million to construct Iraqi prisons, fire stations, and police facilities that were either never started or never completed—\$142 million.

It is absolutely essential for us to provide the Pentagon with the budgetary means they need within that huge budget to root out waste, fraud, and abuse by contractors in war zones overseas. We also must take a close look at how money is misspent here at home—not just in Iraq or Afghanistan. The Air Force—the Air Force, needless to say—has a few airplanes, but apparently cannot ship a package directly from a depot in Corpus Christi, TX, to a National Guard unit in Oklahoma. Because of outdated freight forwarding rules, investigators discovered that one package took a 2,243-mile detour through Houston, TX, to Fort Wayne, IN, and then on to Dallas before it arrived at its destination in Oklahoma. The GAO is investigating the ridiculous shipping regulations that cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

Now, are all of these examples simply so-called bad apples or do they more likely represent a broken system with inadequate oversight? In my view, unfortunately, it is the latter. I think we have a broken system. I think we have billions and billions of taxpayers' dollars being wasted and not going where they need to go, which is to defend our country. The Pentagon's leaders have not done enough to ensure that a dollar spent means a dollar gained in national security.

Frankly, this is not a new problem. In 1940, Senator Harry Truman investigated waste and fraud by the U.S. military. During World War II he proposed the creation of a Senate special committee to investigate the national defense program. The Truman committee identified way back then in the 1940s more than \$15 billion in unnecessary and fraudulent defense spending. That is a huge amount of money. As Senator Truman put it at the time:

We intend to see that no man or corporate group of men shall profit inordinately on the blood of the boys in the fox holes.

I think what Truman said in the 1940s is absolutely true today.

Was Harry Truman unpatriotic for demanding increased congressional oversight on the War Department and defense contractors at a moment of national crisis during World War II? The answer is, of course, no, he was not. He simply demanded that, in his words:

Each dollar expended for war purposes would produce a dollar's worth of the necessary war supplies.

I think that is certainly a reasonable request supported by every taxpayer in this country.

That is why last year I and the Presiding Officer joined with other freshmen colleagues to introduce legislation calling for the creation of a commission on war contracting modeled on the Truman committee. We need such a bipartisan effort more now than ever. Today, government auditors have compiled lists of countless examples of risky and inadequate practices by the Defense Department in overseeing contracts.

The problem is not just private contractors. The Department needs to adopt better practices to stop blatant examples of wasteful and overpriced purchases.

Some examples:

The GAO—the Government Accountability Office—recently assessed 72 major weapons acquisition programs and reported a colossal \$295 billion in cost overruns on a \$1.6 trillion contract portfolio—\$295 billion in cost overruns. That is not a bad apple, that is not an aberration, that speaks to a system that is significantly broken. What is more, on average, these systems are delivered 21 months late. So these contractors end up getting far more than they were originally supposed to get and, to boot, they are almost 2 years late on delivering the product.

It gets even worse than that. The Defense Department has shelled out billions of dollars in bonuses to contractors who don't deserve them. According to one study, award and incentive fees totaling \$8 billion were granted even when the contractors did not deserve the bonuses under the Pentagon's own rules. What a bonus is supposed to be about is you get a reward when you do your job well, when you come in perhaps under contract, when you come in earlier than you had agreed to. That is what a bonus is. But unfortunately, these guys are getting these bonuses even when they perform poorly, and that is clearly unacceptable.

I wish to commend my colleagues, Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER, for their initiative to establish a director of independent cost assessment. It is time for this Congress to impose effective acquisition controls and require the Pentagon to put its financial house in order. Even the Pentagon's own inspector general has admitted that:

The rapid growth of the DOD budget since fiscal year 2000 leaves the department increasingly more vulnerable to the fraud,